



**Work, Society, and the Quality of Life**  
**37:575:110:01 Fall 2025**

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**Office Hours:** By appointment and via Zoom

**Class Days/Time:** Tuesdays 5:40 p.m. – 8:40 p.m.

**Classroom:** Janice H. Levin Building  
94 Rockafeller Road, Livingston Campus and Zoom

**Teaching Assistants:**

|                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Samantha Kossoff | Ashley Tapia          |
| Sarah Zaher      | Manisha Kohli         |
| Gabriele Grant   | Precious Omeye        |
| Aanay Parikh     | Aurora Garcia Sanchez |
| Apryl Adames     | Gavin Pessoa          |

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The nature of people's work largely determines the quality of their lives and their families' lives. Around the world, both the landscape of work and the rewards obtained from work are changing dramatically. In some countries, these changes lead to increased equality and prosperity for everyone. In other countries, the changes have the opposite effect. This course will study these changes using dynamic, active learning methods that are increasingly common in the best workplaces. Students will be able to develop their teamwork, leadership, and negotiating skills, gain valuable feedback about their written and oral communication skills, and develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between work, society, and the quality of life.

## COURSE GOALS AND STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**Learning Objectives.** The student is able to:

**Core Curriculum: CCO-1 and SCL-1 and SCL-2**

- CCO-1: Analyze a contemporary global issue from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- SCL-1: Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- SCL-2: Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

**Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories, and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1).
- Apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2).
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of work. (Goal 6)

**School of Management and Labor Relations:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them, given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)
- Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions (Goal V).
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance (Goal VI)

**Additional Course Objective(s) from the instructor:** By the end of the course, students will be expected to demonstrate that they have met the following learning objectives at the collegiate level appropriate to a 100-level introductory course:

- Demonstrate an understanding of fundamental social science, historical, and legal perspectives, theories, and concepts relating to work, employment relations, and worker movements globally.
- Demonstrate an ability to apply those concepts and knowledge of U.S. labor, laws, and work institutions to understanding contemporary developments in the U.S. and other nations now operating in a global framework.
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences and perspectives on work.
- Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts.
- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.
- Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to labor & employment relations.
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.
- Formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information about work
- Work productively in teams, in social networks, and on an individual basis.

## PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS AND CLASSROOM PROTOCOL

This course uses dynamic, participatory, and active learning methods. Students are expected to play an active role in their own and others' learning. **This means that class attendance and preparation are essential and will count heavily in the evaluation of student performance. References to "in-class" meetings are to the synchronous portion of the class on Tuesday nights on Zoom.**

### Texts & Readings

There is no textbook required for this course. All readings and course materials are posted on Canvas. Specific readings and assignments may change as the course proceeds.

## **Preparation**

Always read the assigned material and complete the forum post for the week before our class meeting so that you can more easily follow the lecture and fully participate in small-group and class discussions. Any PowerPoint slides used weekly will be posted on the course site in the Announcement section after the class. However, the slides may not include all supplementary information provided during lectures and discussions.

## **Participation**

Class sessions will include a mixture of lectures, group discussions, group exercises, and simulations. Discussions and experiential activities may also be held on Canvas and via Zoom in breakout rooms. Students are required to participate *actively* in all aspects of the course.

When participating in discussions, you will be expected to explain your views using **reasoned arguments** and provide **evidence** for assertions. You will need to demonstrate that you understand the difference between **opinion** and **fact**. You will be expected to **respect others' views and listen**. You do not have to agree with your classmates, but you must give them your full attention and consideration.

Any use of electronic equipment during the synchronous portion of the class must be related to the course and authorized by the instructors. Texting, talking on your phone, emailing, or surfing the web on unrelated matters during class time are prohibited during the class's synchronous portions.

## **Group-Based Learning**

Students will be assigned to groups by the professors, and these groups will work together throughout the semester. Each team will be assigned a teaching assistant who will provide guidance to the team and evaluate many aspects of team performance under the professors' supervision. Groups will discuss course reading, participate in experiential exercises, prepare presentations, and participate in other in-class activities together. Students who participate fully and enthusiastically in the experiential components of the course will get the most out of the class. Students' performance in the group will be evaluated by the instructors, the teaching assistants, and the other members of your group.

Group projects and group work in this course are designed to simulate the possibilities and pitfalls of collective action in the workplace and other environments. This course is geared heavily towards group and experiential learning for many reasons. Labor and employment relations studies focus on the strategies and tactics used by employers and employees (and other similar pairings) as they pursue their goals within the political and social frameworks of the areas in which they are located. Additionally, collective action is integral to the relations between and among employers and employees in every country, even though the legal and political context varies widely.

Second, the modern workplace and the global economy rely heavily on teamwork. People are expected to work together on projects and tasks regularly and to demonstrate effective team leadership. Employers in all sectors of the economy evaluate workers on their ability to work productively with others and lead their co-workers. Finally, experiential learning and group work can be fun!

## **Written Assignments**

There are two types of written assignments for this course: online forum discussions and two group papers. See page 6 for details on the group papers.

## **Online Forum Assignments**

Students will be required to participate in regularly assigned online discussions with their team members on Canvas prior to class each week. Questions to be addressed in the online discussion will be posted on the site.

### ***Why do we have forums?***

Forums are intended to foster interaction and collaboration to gain a deeper understanding and mastery of the course content. Moreover, online communication and social networks are rapidly becoming the new medium of collaboration in the modern-day workplace. Our course format is designed to simulate a modern workplace. You may already be familiar with forum discussions if you have taken an online class or joined an online conversation on social media. Forums in this class are different because the format is more structured.

Forums in this course have:

- *Defined membership* - Rutgers students enrolled in this course and assigned to a particular group.
- *Time boundaries* – the forum opens and closes on a set date and time.
- *Limited topics* – the instructor chooses the topic of discussion and poses questions to get the conversation started. Students are encouraged to raise their own questions after the discussion has begun.
- *Rules* – there are clear rules about how to conduct the conversation – similar to norms or ground rules in face-to-face classroom participation.
- *Evaluation* – participation in a forum is evaluated and graded.

## **Attendance**

Students must attend every scheduled synchronous course session. The teaching assistants will take attendance at the beginning of class or the breakout sessions and sometimes at the end of class or breakout session. Students that have an unexcused absence will receive a zero for that week's attendance and participation grade. Students who leave the Zoom session early without the permission of the instructor or T.A.'s will be marked absent for the entire class and graded accordingly. Even if you miss class, you are responsible for that week's assignments (including forum posts).

If you cannot attend a class, **it is your responsibility to inform the Professors in advance**. If that is not possible because of an emergency, do so as soon as practicable. We recognize that illness, death in the family or other emergencies happen, and will excuse absences as long as the affected student can provide the Professors with appropriate documentation.

## **Communication**

The course will use Canvas and Zoom heavily for communication and group work. The instructors will communicate all official course correspondence via Canvas. Students are responsible for all information transmitted to them via Canvas, email, and Zoom by the instructors. No other web-based course-related sites (e.g., Facebook) are permitted for course activity without explicit permission from the instructors. Please feel free to contact the instructors or your teaching assistant via email with questions or concerns about the course with Prof. Ryan at [fr156@smlr.rutgers.edu](mailto:fr156@smlr.rutgers.edu) and Prof. Blatt at [Blatt.Michael@Rutgers.edu](mailto:Blatt.Michael@Rutgers.edu).

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals. Joint efforts are legitimate only when the assistance of others is explicitly acknowledged and permitted by the assignment. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the University community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses. Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit. Students are expected to be familiar with all Rutgers University policies regarding Academic integrity ([academicintegrity.rutgers.edu](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu)).

## Accommodations

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

## Audio and Video Recording are Prohibited\*

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, **students MAY NOT record** any part of this class in any audio or video format regardless of whether the course is held via Zoom, WebEx, and or any other learning management platform. This prohibition on recording includes, but is not limited to, classroom lectures, discussion and/or group break out activities without the **advance written permission** of the professor. \*Students with approved accommodations from the Office of Disability Services must present a Letter of Accommodations to the instructor and discuss accommodations as early in this course as possible. Recording and distribution of such recordings without permission is a violation of educational privacy law.

## **GRADING POLICY**

This course is graded on a 1000-point scale.

|                                     |                                             |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1. Online Forum Discussions         | 300 points (30 points per forum discussion) |
| 2. Class Participation & Attendance | 140 points (10 points per class session)    |
| 3. Group papers:                    |                                             |
| Collective Bargaining Strategy Memo | 100 points                                  |
| Stakeholder Position Paper          | 50 points                                   |
| Testimony and Rebuttal Paper:       | 150 points                                  |
| 4. Simulations:                     |                                             |
| Collective Bargaining Simulation:   | 30 points (participation)                   |
| Senate Simulation:                  | 30 points (participation)                   |
| 5. Quizzes                          | 200 points (50 points per quiz x 4 quizzes) |

|                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Total points possible: | 1,000 points |
|------------------------|--------------|

We reserve the right increase or decrease your final grade for exceptional (good or bad) class participation and attendance – ordinarily by one level (for example, between B and B+). Students who display a strong work ethic and demonstrate improvement throughout the semester may be rewarded.

The final grade breakdown is as follows: A=90+, B+=86-89, B=80-85, C+=76-79, C=70-75, D=60-69, F<60

If you have a question about a specific grade, you are encouraged to speak with your T.A. and/or the instructors.

## Forum Discussions

The weekly forum discussion consists of two parts and requires that you make two posts per week (at a minimum).

In the first post, due by Sunday at midnight, you are expected to answer specific questions we have posed. In your second post, due by Tuesday at class time, you are expected to respond to and/or support/refute posts made by your teammates.

These forum discussions are meant to be interactive. You must make *at least* two posts for each assignment, including one post by midnight on Sunday and a second post prior to class. Your initial post should be your response to the questions posed in the assignment. It may include a reaction to others in the group who have already posted their response. Primarily it should add something substantive and show an understanding of the assigned readings and course content. You are best served by not waiting until Sunday night to write your first post. Rather, timelier posts enhance the group discussion and ensure completion of the week's assignment. You must submit at least one additional post responding to other posts or arguments in the forum.

You will be graded based on several factors including but not limited to the quality of writing, the strength/persuasiveness of your responses/arguments, the relevance and accuracy of your arguments, your tone, the appropriate number of posts, and the use of evidence (the readings and/or external sources) to back-up your assertions.

Because these forum discussions are designed to foster interaction and constructive engagement among team members, missed discussions cannot be made up. Contributions posted after the assignment deadline will not be counted. Automatic deductions will be made for late posts, for not answering all the assigned questions, for missing either the responsive or analytical components, or for not referring to the readings and external sources for evidence.

## Class Participation

Each week your TA will monitor your attendance and evaluate your participation in class. They will be observing characteristics including but not limited to participation in small group discussions, leadership, preparation for class, respect to team members, attentiveness, staying on task, and appropriate use of electronic devices.

## Group papers and projects

You will complete two major group projects with your team:

1. In the first half of the course, you will prepare and conduct a **Collective Bargaining exercise**. This will require team preparation of a **2-3 page "Collective Bargaining Strategy Memo"** as well as **team preparation for performance during a bargaining simulation**.
2. In the second half of the course, you will **prepare testimony for a mock U.S. Senate Sub-committee hearing** on an immigration reform bill. This will involve a group presentation and a **2-3 page, "Testimony and Rebuttal "paper."** The paper will consist of your group's testimony to the Senate Sub-committee and should outline your positions, the expected counterarguments, and your persuasive response to those counterarguments.

Papers must be submitted through Canvas. Papers will not be accepted via email unless the instructors explicitly give you permission. There will be rubrics available for both papers. All students must turn in the same copy of the group paper.

### **Evaluating Team Papers**

In assessing the papers, we will be looking for the following qualities:

1. Clear overall arguments
2. Effective use of evidence (including but not limited assigned readings and external sources) to support your arguments. You **must cite all sources** of information used in your papers (you may choose the citation format).
3. Quality of the writing (college-level grammar and syntax) and integration of each group member's contributions into a single paper.
4. Responsiveness to all posed questions.

### **Working with your Groups**

In addition to in-class activities, you will also likely need time outside of class to work with your group on your papers, simulation prep, and other group activities. You may use any method for this interaction that is agreed to by the entire group.

### **Quizzes**

There will be four quizzes covering readings and class discussion given over the course of the semester at approximately four-week intervals. These quizzes will not be cumulative. Questions will be drawn from the course material covered during the weeks identified for the quiz. Each quiz will consist of true/false and/or multiple-choice questions.

**Notice:** All aspects of this syllabus, grading, and assignments are subject to change by the instructors. Students will be advised of any changes as soon as is practicable.

| CLASS | DATE                                                   | TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | September 2<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b>  | <b>Course Introduction and Overview</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2     | September 9<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b>  | <b>Team Dynamics &amp; Group Process</b><br><br>Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hardaker, M., and B. K. Ward. <i>How to Make a Team Work</i>.</li> <li>• Hill, Linda. <i>A Note on Team Process</i>.</li> <li>• Case study in groups--Retaining an NFL Star</li> </ul><br><b>Forum One Due</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 3     | September 16<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b> | <b>Workers &amp; the Middle Class</b><br><br>Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ehrenreich, Barbara. <i>Nickel and Dime</i> (excerpts)</li> <li>• Meyerson, Harold. <i>The Fallacy of Post-Industrial Prosperity</i>.</li> <li>• Klein, Ezra. <i>Why a Middle-Class Lifestyle Remains Out of Reach for So Many</i></li> <li>• Fussel, Paul. <i>Class: A Guide Through the American Status System</i>, Ch. 1</li> </ul><br><b>Forum Two Due</b>                                                                                                                |
| 4     | September 23<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b> | <b>Labor and Employment Rights</b><br><br>Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muhl, C. J. <i>The Employment-at-will Doctrine: Three Major Exceptions</i>.</li> <li>• EEOC, Federal Laws Prohibiting Job Discrimination – Questions &amp; Answer</li> <li>• Reardon, K. <i>The Memo Every Woman Keeps in Her Desk</i>.</li> </ul><br><b>Quiz 1: Open: Sunday, September 21, at 10 a.m.</b><br><b>Close: Tuesday, September 23, at 5 p.m.</b><br><br><b>Forum Three Due</b>                                                                                      |
| 5     | September 30<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b> | <b>Consensus Decision Making</b><br><br>Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consensus Decision Making</li> <li>• A Short Guide on Consensus Decision Making</li> </ul><br><b>Forum Four Due</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 6     | October 7<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b>    | <b>Unionization &amp; Collective Representation</b><br><br>Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jaumotte, Florence &amp; Buitron, Carolina. <i>Power from the People</i>.</li> <li>• Sachs, Benjamin. <i>Worker Centers and the "Labor Organization" Question</i></li> <li>• "Collective Bargaining," Michael D. Yates, from <u>Why Unions Matter</u></li> <li>• Case study in groups: <i>Does This Company Need a Union?</i></li> </ul><br>Collective Bargaining Simulation: Casino Europa Prep<br><br><b>Film: Viva La Causa</b><br><br><b>Forum Five Due</b> |



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| 7 | October 14<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b> | <b>Management &amp; Organizational Leadership</b><br><br>Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scott, Richard &amp; Davis, Gerald. <i>Organizations and organizing</i>, Ch. 1</li> <li>• Case study: <i>Treadway Tire Company: Job Dissatisfaction and High Turnover at the Lima Tire Plant.</i></li> </ul><br>Collective Bargaining Strategy Paper Due 10/16 11:59 PM<br>Forum Six Due |
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| CLASS | DATE                                                  | TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| 8     | October 21<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b>  | <b>Collective Bargaining Simulation</b><br><br>Due: Signed collective bargaining agreements are due by the end of class.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 9     | October 28<br><b>Via Zoom</b>                         | <b>The Future of Work &amp; Globalization</b><br><br>Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future Work Skills, 2020.</li> <li>• Graton, L. <i>The Future of Work.</i></li> <li>• Sen, Amartya. <i>How to Judge Globalization</i></li> <li>• Satell, Gregg. <i>How Technology is Changing the Way Organizations Learn</i></li> <li>• Rotman, David. <i>How Technology Is Destroying Jobs</i></li> <li>• Autor, David, and Dorn, David. <i>How Technology Wrecks the Middle Class</i></li> <li>• <i>Microchips for Employees? One Company Says Yes, NYTimes</i></li> </ul><br>Quiz 2: Open: Sunday, October 26, at 10 a.m.<br>Close: Tuesday, October 28, at 5 p.m.<br>Forum Seven Due<br><br>Panel Discussion |
| 10    | November 4<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b>  | <b>Public Policy and Political Action</b><br><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Film: Inequality for All</b></li> </ul> Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guiner, Lani. <i>Beyond Legislatures: Social Movements, Social Change, and the Possibilities of Demosprudence</i></li> <li>• Harold Meyerson, <i>The Seeds of a New Labor Movement</i></li> <li>• Sarah Leonard, <i>The Future We Want: Radical Ideas for the New Century</i></li> </ul><br><b>Assignment of Stake Holder Groups</b><br>Forum Eight Due                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 11    | November 11<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b> | <b>Coalition Building and The Politics of Immigration</b><br>Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fine - Galbraith Final Paper</li> <li>• Massey: Backfire at the Border</li> <li>• Meissner: U.S. Temporary Worker Programs-Lessons Learned</li> <li>• <b>Activity: Coalition Building</b></li> </ul> Quiz 3: Open: Sunday, November 9 at 10 a.m.<br>Close: Tuesday, November 11 at 5 p.m.<br>Forum Nine Due<br>Stakeholder Position Paper due Sunday, November 9, at 11:59 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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| 12 | November 18<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b> | <b>Simulation Preparation: U.S. Senate Subcommittee Hearing on Immigration Reform</b><br>Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Workers Betrayed by Visa Loopholes</i></li> <li>• <i>Immigration plan bad for U.S. workers</i></li> <li>• <i>There's a better way to do immigration reform</i></li> </ul> <b>Activity: Prep for Simulation</b><br>Forum Ten Due |
| 13 | November 25<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b> | <b>Mock U.S. Senate Subcommittee Hearing Simulation</b><br>Due: Testimony and Rebuttal Paper Due at 11:59 PM                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 14 | December 2<br><b>Janice H<br/>Levin<br/>Building</b>  | <b>Course Wrap-up Class and Review</b><br>Quiz 4: Open Sunday, November 30, at 10 a.m.<br>Close: Tuesday, December 2 at 5 p.m.<br><br>In-Class Peer Review                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |